

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4363

S E C R E T CAIRO 7065

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, US

SUBJECT: SOVIET MESSAGE RE EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN INTENTIONS

1. FAHMY, WHO HAD BEEN BUSY WITH VISITING UK
FONSEC OWEN MOST OF THE DAY, ASKED THAT I MEET WITH
HIM AT HIS APARTMENT LATE LAST NIGHT. THERE HE
GAVE ME THE TEXT OF A SHARP SOVIET "MESSAGE" ON
CURRENT EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN TENSIONS, WHICH HE SAID
THE SOVIETS HAVE IN THE PAST FEW DAYS PRESENTED TO
A NUMBER OF ARAB STATES, BUT NOT DIRECTLY TO EGYPT.
THE PRESENT TEXT HAD BEEN PROVIDED BY CROWN PRINCE
HASSAN OF JORDAN TO THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR.
(DOCUMENT THAT FAHMY GAVE ME WAS IN FACT TORN FROM
A "TOP SECRET" TELEGRAM FROM THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY
IN AMMAN.) HOWEVER, GOE IS ALSO GETTING THE MESSAGE
FROM SOME OTHER FREINDLY ARAB STATES (UNSPECIFIED)
TO WHOM THE SOVIETS HAD GIVEN IT.

2. FAHMY SAID HE HAD EARLIER IN THE DAY SUMMONED
SOVIET AMBASSADOR POLYAKOV TO ASK ABOUT THE
MESSAGE, BUT POLYAKOV PROFESSED TO KNOW NOTHING
ABOUT IT. FAHMY CLAIMED THAT HE HAD THEN GIVEN
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THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR AN "ULTIMATUM", DEMANDING WHAT
HE CALLED AN "APOLOGY" FROM THE SOVIETS BY TODAY.
IF NO SUCH APOLOGY IS RECEIVED, HE HAD WARNED,
GOE "WILL DISMISS USSR FROM GENEVA." HE HAD TOLD
POLYAKOV THAT, IF THE SOVIETS ARE PATENTLY ACTING
AS AN "ENEMY" OF EGYPT, THEY HAVE FORFEITED THEIR
RIGHT TO ACT AS A MEDIATOR AT GENEVA AND GOE WOULD

REFUSE TO ATTEND ANY CONFERENCE WITH THE SOVIETS THERE. FAHMY HAD ALSO TOLD THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR HE WANTS AN ANSWER BY 1100 LOCAL TODAY. IF A SATISFACTORY ANSWER IS NOT RECEIVED, GOE WILL PUBLISH THE SOVIET NOTE AND THE EGYPTIAN POSITION ON IT.

3. FAHMY SAID PRESIDENT SADAT WANTS PRESIDENT CARTER AND SECRETARY VANCE TO KNOW ABOUT THE SOVIET MESSAGE AND TO HAVE GOE VIEWS ON IT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AREA. HE THEN GAVE ME A SEPARATE "ORAL MESSAGE" FROM PRESIDENT SADAT TO PRESIDENT CARTER (SEPTTEL) SETTING FORTH GOE VIEWS ON THE SOVIET NOTE.

4. ENGLISH TEXT OF SOVIET NOTE, AS REPORTED BY EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN AMMAN, FOLLOWS:

QUOTE IN RECENT DAYS MORE AND MORE NEWS IS COMING WHICH INDICATE THAT EGYPT IS BUILDING UP THE TENSION IN ITS RELATIONS WITH LIBYA. EGYPTIAN TROOPS ARE BEING CONCENTRATED ON THE LIBYAN BORDERS, MILITARY MANEUVERS ARE BEING HELD, THREATENING STATEMENTS ARE BEING MADE, INCLUDING OFFICIAL ONES. ONE CAN CLEARLY SEE THAT THERE IS AN ATTEMPT OF EGYPTIAN MILITARY PRESSURE ON LIBYA AIMED AT PROVOKING A MILITARY CONFLICT AND ENCOURAGING INTERNAL ACTIONS AGAINST THE LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT OF THIS NEIGHBORING ARAB STATE. ESCALATION OF THIS CONFLICT SITUATION CAUSED BY ANTI-LIBYAN ACTIONS OF EGYPT WOULD LEAD TO THE EXISTENCE OF ONE
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MORE DANGEROUS HOTBED OF TENSION, ESPECIALLY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN THE REGION THAT IS HOT EVEN WITHOUT ANY SUCH NEW HOTBED. IT IS QUITE CLEAR THAT IF EGYPT GETS INVOLVED INTO A MILITARY ADVENTURE AGAINST LIBYA, IT WOULD LEAD TO A NEW AND DANGEROUS DEGREE OF TENSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, MEDITERRANEAN AND AFRICA. ALL THIS WOULD NOT ONLY AFFECT THE INTEREST OF THE ARABS BUT WOULD BE TO THE BENEFIT OF ISRAEL AND THOSE WHO SUPPORT ISRAEL. THE DANGER OF A NEW MILITARY CONFLICT BETWEEN THE ARABS IN THE ARAB WORLD WEAKENS THE ARABS AND THEIR FORCES AND DIVERTS THEIR ATTENTION FROM THEIR MAIN TASK, NAMELY THE STRUGGLE FOR LIQUIDATION OF THE ISRAELI AGGRESSION CON SEQUENCES. EGYPT IS EXERTING PRESSURE UPON A STATE THAT HAS BEEN CONDUCTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC REFORMS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ITS PEOPLE; THAT NATIONALIZED ITS OIL RESOURCES; THAT HAS PURSUED AN INDEPENDENT POLICY IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND THAT IS WORKING FOR

A SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES. THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT BEARS A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY, NO MATTER WHAT ITS PURPOSE, WHETHER TO LAY ITS HANDS ON THE LIBYAN OIL OR TO DIVERT THE ATTENTION OF ITS OWN PEOPLE FROM THE DIFFERENCE (DIFFICULT?) PROBLEMS OF EGYPT ITSELF. IF THE EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP LEADS THE SITUATION TOWARDS A MILITARY CLASH WITH LIBYA, IF IT CONTINUES ITS EFFORTS TO ATTACK THE REGIME EXISTING IN LIBYA, IT SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT ALL THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE HARD TO PREDICT WILL LIE UPON EGYPT.

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO UNDERESTIMATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS SITUATION, BELIEVING THAT IT PROBABLY WILL NOT LEAD TO AN OPEN CONFLICT. THE ESCALATION OF THREATS AND
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MILITARY PRESSURE HAS ITS OWN LOGIC. IT IS BETTER TO UNDERTAKE STEPS AIMED AT PREVENTING A DANGEROUS TURN OF THE EVENTS THAN TO FACE "FAIT ACCOMPLI". WE BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION DEMANDS THAT THE ARAB STATES, ESPECIALLY THOSE HAVING INFLUENCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, TAKE A CLEAR POSITION CONCERNING EGYPT'S ACTIONS AND TAKE MEASURES TO EXERT A PREVENTIVE INFLUENCE UPON IT TO PREVENT FURTHER HASTY ACTIONS. IN MOSCOW THEY EXPECT THAT THIS, "OUR APPEAL WHICH WE ARE DOING IN A FRIENDLY WAY," WILL BE PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE JORDANIAN LEADERSHIP. UNQUOTE

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